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HENRY WARD BEECHER.

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"AS TO THE LORD."

"Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eye-service, as men-pleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God; and whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance; for ye serve the Lord Christ."—Col. III: 22,23,24.

We are taught in the New Testament that human life and society, and the whole natural economy within which life and society are developed, are but a part of a greater system—a substantially moral system, of which God is himself the grand center; so that every part of this vast secular economy runs back and is related to the great Author, Inspirer and Conductor of it. It is true that men in their ignorance and folly have been accustomed to speak of the world as being at enmity with God; but looking at it in a large and philosophical view, there is no antagonism between secular things and things eternal; between the moral government of God and the physical government which obtains. All of them are part and parcel of one thing. We are subjects of a God whose realm is universal, and whose reign touches every living creature.

Jesus also taught that this system of human actions ran back, in effect, to him, and that all human actions might spring from him, as a grand fountain of motive; so that whatever other inspiration of human conduct there might be, it would have, either in co-operation or in correction, this supreme motive and influence; namely, its relation to God, who rules over the universal system under which we are living. In such a sense, we are taught, has Jesus identified himself as the manifestation of God; in such a sense does he stand as God; in such a sense is he related to the course of things, that all the acts of human life—the minutest and remotest parts of it—are acts bearing upon him.

The manufacturer in his office knows that through building after building filled with machinery, running out to the very first and rudest processes, every single act of every single operative, down to the last and lowest boy, has its direct commercial connection with him and his interest. There is not

Sunday Evening, Oct. 6, 1872. Lesson: Matt. xxv., 31-46; Hymns (Plymouth Collection): Nos. 1272, 1235, 1262.

one of the wheels that revolve of the ten thousand; there is not a thread spun nor woven; there is not a color mixed nor employed; there is not a thing done by any of the hands working in his vast establishment, of whom there may be hundreds and even thousands, that is not related directly to his interest.

The whole economy of the globe is, as it were, but a small manufactory under the direction of God; and there is not a single act performed in it which has not some relation to the thought, the feelings, the purpose of God. And he declares himself to be in a wonderful sense identified with everything that is going on in life, in one way or another.

I have read in your hearing to-night that surprising parable spoken by the Saviour, in which he represents all men as summoned at last in judgment. It is addressed especially to the Gentile world, rather than to the Jewish; for, when it is said, "All nations shall be gathered before him," the original terms are those which are almost everywhere else translated *Gentiles*. It is alleged that when the race are gathered before him, and he puts them on trial, those who are blessed and invited to come, are invited and blessed because they have succored him in distress, and ministered to him with love-service and fidelity; and in surprise they say, "When?" They are not conscious of having seen the Crowned One. And the reply is, "I was hidden in every little child; in every poor abandoned person; in every unfortunate wretch; in every human creature that needed sympathy and patience and forbearance and help; and when you did it to them, you did it to them, to be sure, but you did it to more than them—you did it to me, too." On the other hand, those who are rejected are rejected because they have lived selfishly and self-indulgently, and so have not ministered to him in his distress; and in surprise they say, "When saw we thee necessitous, and did not minister to thee?" And he replies, "Every time you neglected an act of humanity; every time you were cruel and selfish and remorseless toward your fellow-men, you neglected me, and were cruel and selfish and remorseless toward me. For I was behind the beggar. I was behind the prisoner. I was behind the child of shame. I was identified with the street-walker. I was within every heart that throbbed with pain, and within every soul that was darkened for want of knowledge. It was me that you insulted—not them alone. Through them you wronged me. Every act that you performed was performed not upon them alone, but through them upon me."

Now, making every allowance you please for parabolic teaching, you cannot avoid (and who should wish to avoid it?) the fact that

Jesus has identified himself with human life—with the whole course of man's conduct; so that what we do at all, we do not do merely with reference to the thing that incited it. We act doubly in every important deed of our life. And it is the thing itself, or the person toward whom it is performed, that is indissolubly associated with the process which we adopt. "As you have done it to these," Christ says, "you have done it to me, too;" and on this ground he exhorts men, saying, "Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

Hence it is taught that there is a personal service in the most unlikely things. That is what man needs; because that is the most powerful stimulus the human soul can receive for development. Of all the motives or things in this world, there is nothing that moves men so effectually as the living creature. We are a thousand times more influenced by living forces in men, than we are by the agencies of nature, or by things which we have, or which we seek. There is no stimulus comparable to that which springs from an active, living soul upon living souls.

But there are ten thousand parts of human life which seem to be hidden from men's vision. A child feels the stimulus of the father's hand and the mother's heart, and finds it easy to do right things at home. But let that child be sent away among strangers, and when unwelcome tasks are imposed upon him, he often falls off and fails, because he is removed from all the things that he cares for, and the motive to do disagreeable things, to take up heavy burdens, to perform duties that are difficult, and to be consecutive, persevering and enduring in noble and right courses, is gone. Many and many a man at home is like a flower in a greenhouse, where there is moisture in the air, and where moisture is administered to it by the hand of the gardener; but a man away from home, on the other hand, is like a plant that is turned out into the blazing sun, and is without care, and is dried up both in stem and root.

As this personal power is the most natural and universal and continuing, and as it makes the tasks and difficult places of life easier, so it is provided for in the moral government of God, in this respect: that there is no one single position in which a man can be put by the divine providence; there are no duties that can be made incumbent upon him; there are no tasks that he can be required to take up; there are no sufferings that he may be called to endure; there are no self-denials that he may be expected to practice,—which have not Christ in them. It is not simply for yourself, it is not merely for your own pleasure, that you do the things which go to make up a Christian life; it is for Christ.

There could be no more striking illustration of this given than that which is contained in the text, where it says, "Servants (*slaves* it is in the original. *Slaves* is generic; *servants* is specific)—"servants, obey in all things your masters." The time has come, I suppose, when we can afford to be honest with texts; and if we give a true rendering to this one, we shall read it thus: "Slaves, obey in all things your masters." And then is added, "*according to the flesh.*" In another place it is said, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord." That relationship is established in the universal economy of God. The obligation stands in God, in the Lord. It is nature, and therefore it is right. It is nature, and therefore it is grace, in the higher sense of the term. The apostle says to slaves, "Obey in all things your masters *according to the flesh*"; that is, those who are physically, but not morally, your masters; those who are your masters not by right, but in nature as things have happened. "Obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eye-service, as men-pleasers"; not working when they are looking at you, and shirking when they are not looking at you, saying, "We do not owe them any service." A man cannot afford to be unfaithful under any circumstances. A man cannot afford to be mean at any time. A man cannot afford to do less than his best at all times and under all circumstances. No matter how wrongfully you are placed, and no matter how unjustly you are treated, you cannot, for your own sake, afford to use anything but your better self, nor to render anything but your better service. And certainly you cannot when you consider that it is to the Lord that you are acting.

Still further, the apostle goes on to command that slaves shall obey their masters "in singleness of heart"—with simplicity, honesty, directness—"fearing God. And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, [putting your heart in it] as to the Lord, and not unto men."

A grinding old fellow he is that you are bound out to. He stints you in your bread and your meat. He clothes you in the worst possible manner. He gets you up at the earliest hour, and keeps you up till the latest. He drives you out to your labor. He overworks you through the weary passages of life. He is a penurious old hunks, coining your very blood. And you say, "It serves him right if I do cheat him." Yes, it serves him right, but it serves you wrong, and it serves God wrong. You cannot afford to cheat a cheater. You cannot afford to lie to a liar. You cannot afford to be mean to a mean man. You cannot afford to do other than deal uprightly with any man, no matter what exigencies may exist between him and you. No man can afford to be anything

but a true man, living in his higher nature, and acting from the noblest considerations.

If you say, "It is not in human nature to do these things," then it must be in divine nature. If you say, "I cannot, nobody can, find reason for doing them after such provocation," then do them, as the apostle directs that you should, "as to the Lord, and not unto men."

There is more emancipation in this than you have any idea of. If you take a man at the lowest point; if you take him where he is, as it were, a mere lump of earth, it is very easy for you to mold him—almost as easy as it is for the potter, having put a lump of clay on his wheel, to mold it as he will. At first a man is nothing but a bundle of brute forces; but inspire him, and let him begin to have lines of spirituality and immortality struck through his lower nature, and it begins to augment, and becomes larger and larger in the hands of him that handles it. The smaller it is the easier it is to manage; and the larger it is the more difficult it is to manage; but as it expands it becomes more and more radiant. And gradually as it becomes filled with nobler thoughts and aspirations, it becomes a creature that yearns for another and a higher sphere. And after it has had long culture in things spiritual, it gives signs and tokens of divinity. Then no man can make a slave of it. He cannot hold it.

Why is it that eggs will hatch, and that the birds cannot prevent it? They have warmth brooding upon them, and nature swells in them. The reason why the shell gives way is the largeness of that which is in it. It is growth that emancipates men. It is easy to keep men down where they started, who have not begun to grow; but if you put a tree that is alive and growing even in the sidewalk and under the curbstone, though the stones may eat into it, and retard its growth, it will force its way out and up. You cannot long control and deal unjustly with that which is noble, beautiful and right. There is an inherent power in virtue, and truth, and dignity, and manhood, and fear of God, and love of man; and if you are a slave in the economy of human life, if you have a master according to the flesh, though not according to God, and if he be a hard master, and treat you wickedly, the worse he is, the better do you be. You cannot take yourself out of his hands in any way so quick as by making yourself so large that he cannot handle you. It is soul-goodness that makes it hard to oppress men. There is many a foot that will tramp the dusty ground, unbeautiful, homely, without a thought; but there are very few, not even excepting ragged and degraded boys, who will

not hesitate to put their foot on a bed of flowers. Rather than soil such beauty they will keep in the alley and go around. And in life there are many men who will treat vulgarly the vulgar, and brutally the brutal, but who, when they meet that which they are satisfied is good, will treat it not rudely nor disdainfully, but with gentleness and consideration. Patient continuance in well-doing will put to shame those who harshly and disrespectfully treat men.

"Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance."

Even if rectitude of conduct fails of present remuneration, it will be rewarded in the future. If a slave is faithful, and his faithfulness is not remunerated; or, if an apprentice does the best he can, and is not appreciated, he is not to relax his efforts to do well. The apostle teaches that servants should do right, although their right conduct is not recompensed immediately. The reckoning is not to be limited to a short period. There is a providence which reaches through all one's life. He that does right under all circumstances, and especially under circumstances whose tendency is to lead men to wrong-doing, will certainly receive his reward sooner or later. The thing works itself out in one way or another. All a man's life is a period in which he is to be repaid for his right doings. And there is to be another life, in which there is to be another and grander remuneration.

This is the general statement, then, of the doctrine under consideration; namely, that God includes the whole system in which we live as part and parcel of one economy; and that he identifies himself with every portion of it; so that no man can act in any way, without acting, not only directly and personally toward the more obvious and proximate causes, but remotely and subtly through them toward the ever-living, the ever-just, and the ever-loving God.

It is this view, I remark, first, by way of application, that makes good things better, and beautiful things more beautiful, and admirable things yet more admirable. God stands behind every good and noble thing which we love. If you love your father and mother, if you love your brother and sister, if you love your husband or wife, if you love your friend and neighbor, if you love teacher, governor, prophet or king, through these you are brought near to God. And there is an exaltation in the consideration that we do not end our services with those who are next to us; that our affections go further and lay hold on those that are beyond. We seem to aim them at certain objects; we seem to bury them in

the hearts of those to whom we are especially attached; we seem to plant them in the midst of those who are near and dear to us; but they go on and on and touch a higher nerve.

The lover does not love alone. The thrill which he feels is a part of the universal experience. God is loved when loveliness is loved. God is honored when honor is recognized. God is obeyed when true magistracy is obeyed. And all our relations tend toward exaltation. For we never love downward. We never love outwardly on a level with ourselves. Whoever loves rightly loves upward, and places the object of his love, as it were, against the bosom of God, and, loving that object, loves God in whose bosom it is. This thought is one which is the source of great power and beauty and dignity.

An element of time is indispensable to us; but that which we need above everything else, is a sense of things eternal. There is nothing more fugitive than ordinary human affections. There is nothing that seems more like the reflection of iridescent hues, which are reflected for a moment in the sunlight, and then are gone. On the other hand, there is nothing that seems more permanent and unwasting than a mother's love. There is immortality in maternal love, and in paternal love, because they do not stop on the object, the human heart. There is a lens through which it passes, and it becomes something more in its relations to a higher government of which our earthly government is but an image or shadow.

Secondly, when men are not helped by their circumstances; when their efforts fail to bring the best results; when all ordinary influences tend to provoke the worst side of human nature—then our Lord says, "Do the right thing, and do it for me." Is it possible? Yes, it is possible, if one can but bring himself to believe that Christ is identified with him—that every thought and every feeling, positive or negative, has a relation directly to Christ. It is not easy to do right under discouraging circumstances, but it is possible.

A boy is bound out. He is the subject of hard treatment. His mistress and master are both tyrannical. His fare is bad, and his treatment is as bad. He is full of high spirits and vague yearnings. Everything in him seems repressed; and under a sense of injury, he is tempted to sulk, and neglect his duty. His better nature is in danger of being eaten out by the rust and corrosion of anger and revenge. The bad side of him is all the time being irritated. And he says to himself, "I will break this bondage. I will not endure such infernal usage any longer. It shall come to an end." In his master's family is one who has been interested in him from the time

he came as a stranger on the premises; she has admired his industry, and his character, his heart has gone out toward her, and a feeling of mutual confidence has sprung up between them; and, watching him with gentleness, and tenderness, and goodness, in the moment of his distemperature, and displeasure, and desperation, she says to him, "William, there is nothing in my father or mother, I am ashamed to say, to inspire or encourage you to be faithful where you are; you are basely treated; I know what you suffer, and I deeply sympathize with you; but will you not, for my sake, keep on and do the best you can?" With a full assurance of the love which burns in her heart for him, and with a consciousness of the love which burns in his heart for her, he says, "Yes, I will." And now, whether it be day or whether it be night, whether it be light or whether it be dark, what does he care? How prompt, how earnest, how faithful he is! How does he seek to do everything in the best manner, knowing that she will see it, and be made happy by it! How does he seek to make his life manly and noble in every respect! And the old man says, "What has got into this young man? He has turned over a new leaf. I do not understand it." No, he does not; but does not *she* understand it? "For my sake!" she says, now and then, when his courage fails; and do not her words give new strength to him? In the midst of his suffering, is it not a joy for him to work for her sake?

It is thus with Jesus, who loves us, and gave himself for us, and waits for us, and is ready to disclose to us his children the beauty that is in him. When we are in our weakness tempted to do wrong, he asks us to stand in our places and do the things that are right; and he says, "If other motives are not strong enough to lead you to do it, do it as unto me, and not as unto your master; not as unto your employer; not as unto the tyrant who for the time has power over you." And this ought to make life easy in hard places. It ought to inspire the hearts of men with nobility when the devil tempts them to meanness.

In the struggles of men throughout society, the direct motives to the highest conduct are continually failing; and here is precisely the auxiliary motive which we all need.

The secret of the endurance and fidelity of Moses (one of the most extraordinary natures of which there is any record, who fashioned a nation in the wilderness, framed its constitution, and administered its affairs during years which usually are years of dotage) is declared to be this: that he "endured as seeing Him who is invisible."

Over and above the knowledge of things as they are, is the

knowledge of things that are possible; and in all the dark passages of society, in its restrictions and limitations and excitements and provocations, we need that encouragement which comes from the consciousness, "Thou, God, art with me. I am not serving my party, nor my nation, so much as I am serving thee." In the affairs of life; in the fiery temptations which beset us on every hand; in the midst of the discordant elements by which we are surrounded in business, and public places, and elsewhere, what we need, above everything else, is a sense of the kind, and gentle, and loving power of God. If we can have that with us, how will the sea, forever in its storm, be calm to us! If we can have that with us, how easy it will be to do the things which are necessary to be done! Under great provocations to a contrary course, we need more of the consciousness of God with us.

This is the secret of living for our nobler, and not for our lower, selves. A large part of our life must be drudgery. By *drudgery* I mean tasks that men ought to perform, but that they do not want to perform—tasks that have in them very little to remunerate. Work is divine. It carries its own food and drink with it. A man loves work if he be a man. His happiness lies in normal and harmonious action, if his powers work harmoniously and right. Now and then, however, there are things which it is incumbent on us to do, but which we do not like to do. I love to take a child and hold it in my arms; but I would not like to cleanse it. I like to watch the sports of children; but I should not like to stand at the tub and wash their linen. There is such a thing as work, and there is such a thing as drudgery. All lives have in them a great deal that men would rather shirk and avoid. But it is manly to do the lowest things, and the most drudging things, cheerfully, "as unto the Lord," in the place where one stands.

No man puts a paling below a precipice. Men do not fall up, and therefore a fence on the lower side of a precipice would be unnecessary. It is only on the upper side that guards are placed, if anywhere.

Happily it is not where things are easy that God stands. I cannot think of God as sitting on a throne and leaving men to take care of themselves. I can only think of him as standing where they need him. I think of God as something tremendous, something immense, filling all space, and not as something microscopic. God is where temptations are. And where vulgarity, and sordidness, and meanness, and treachery, and all things degrading are tending to lead men astray, there the voice of Christ is, saying, "As unto me."

The things which bring us pleasure have not so much voice in them; but the things which tend to provoke our worst feelings stand in such near relation to our innermost lives that, if we could understand what they mean, we should hear them say to us, "As unto the Lord, and not unto men."

You do not like your lesson at school, my little boy. It is dry and difficult. It is up-hill work to master it. Anybody can go down-hill, but it takes legs to go up-hill. Who cannot do things which are so easy that they do themselves? The test of manhood is the power to do with cheerfulness things which are difficult and disagreeable. Do the things that you do not like to do first, and do them best. Do them feeling, "Whatever is hard God accepts with double pleasure from me." Where things, that you are called upon to do go, against the grain, there Christ stands, desiring to stimulate and encourage you, and saying, "Do this as to me." Do not, then, shirk hard, disagreeable, painful duties. Do them; and do them as unto God.

There are endless classifications in life. "The first shall be last, and the last shall be first." Although there is a general law running through natural and social affairs in this world, yet there is apparent confusion among men. Those who should be at the top, according to rules of justice and desert, so far as we understand them, are at the bottom. Many persons are poor who deserve wealth. Many men who are virtuous and pure-minded are under the control of men who are impure. It would almost seem that men are out of their sphere in this life, so that nothing but a revolutionary process can rectify the incongruities of their circumstances.

Are those who are placed over you, in the store, in the shop, or on the ship, irritable and provoking? Nevertheless, "obey your masters in the flesh." Obey those who are your superiors according to the false estimate of this physical globe. Obey most faithfully when all the circumstances by which you are surrounded are such as to tempt you to be unfaithful. Make your courage appear when there is no visible ground for encouragement. Let your fidelity be most eminent when the provocations to a want of fidelity are strongest. Serve most cheerfully when it is hardest to serve. For Christ says, "I will take your service as rendered to me."

How many persons examine their evidences and are dissatisfied with them because they come short of the evidences of other people! They hear Christians tell about the experience of Christ's love in their hearts; they hear them tell what Christ has done for their souls; and they go home and say, "I have never had such a rapture of love to Christ as these people have." And Christ says to

them, "If you love me keep my commandments." No matter whether they have the feeling or not, he will take the obedience for the experience. It does not follow, because you have not had a certain experience, that you do not love Christ. If you have no other way of testifying to your love, do it by serving him. He will take the things that you do in lieu of love. Take the things that are hard to do, and do them. See to it that you "love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you."

There is a subtleness in love which transcends that of all other feelings. If you do a thing knowing that it is to be seen of men, you may be actuated by a motive of pride, or the love of approbation; but if you do a thing not expecting that men will know it, you will be more apt to do it from a feeling of love to Christ. There are things done from very subtle motives in the higher ranges of true affection. And if we attempt to do things which are noble under discouragements, for the sake of Christ, we shall receive our reward in the world to come. There is no deed performed, no service rendered, in the name of the Lord, that fails to receive the grateful recognition of Christ. Things that you do to please him when you are tempted of the devil, he will never forget. It is such things that go to make the wreath, the coronet, which is to be ours in the heavenly land.

The excuse which men make to justify their wrong-doing, or their low and vulgar lives, is that their circumstances are unfavorable to noble lives and right-doing. Undoubtedly it is harder for men to live right in some circumstances than in others; but such are the provisions of the Lord Jesus Christ, that no man can be placed in any circumstances in which he may not have the inspiration of the Divine Spirit in his soul, leading him in the right way. Wherever we are, we need not lack for a motive to perform noble deeds. In darkness or twilight, as well as in full daylight, we are to be followers of him who in Gethsemane said, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt," and drank it to the dregs, being upheld and strengthened by angels. Wherever we are, in darkness and trial, under temptatation, we may press the evil away; but when we find that it cannot be avoided, it becomes us to say, "If it must be, let me stand in my place and act as a man, doing my duty as unto the Lord." Then angels will comfort us, and life will be equalized, and by and by the scenes will change. And oh, what a transformation there will be when all that which is relative shall pass away! But when men die, when their bodies are dissolved, there are three

things which remain, if they possessed them before; namely, faith, hope and love. These will abide when death shall have taken down the old tabernacle, and left many of the appetites and passions behind. When we shall be translated into the spiritual condition, around about all that part of us which takes hold on the eternal sphere—our upper selves, our moral selves, our spiritual selves —as centers, shall abide faith, hope and love. And the greatest of these is Love.

By this celestial power, then, let us rectify everything that is evil; by it let us interpret all things that are about us; and by it let us live nobler lives. Then, dying, may we rise to the glory and the immortality of the heavenly city.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

To whom could we go but unto thee, thou most merciful God, with all our imperfections and weaknesses; with our ignorances and manifold wants; with our transgressions pressing upon us in memory; with the consciousness every day of our fallibility? Poor in thinking and in conceiving, and yet poorer in the execution of things right, are we; and we need One that can love those who are not lovable. We need One that can find argument in himself, and not in us, for patience and forbearance. We need One whose greatness is more than men can know, and the power of whose greatness is not in his right hand, but in his heart. Such art thou, O Lord God, ancient of days, supreme in heaven and over all the earth, the Guide, the Ruler, but, above all, the Friend and Redeemer. Thou who dost meet the race in its beginnings, and dost minister to it; thou whose servants are the laws of nature; thou who hast ordained all those processes of human life which concern us, and act upon us; thou who art leading the whole earth up as a household of which thou art thyself the Head—thou art fitted for us—for our want, for our weakness; and in thee we are wise and strong and good who in ourselves are foolish, and weak, and full of all unmannerly thought.

We rejoice that we may believe thus in thee; that we are not shut away from thee by fear; that we are not left in doubt and apprehension and darkness; that the more we are wounded, and the more our souls inwardly bleed, the nearer are we brought by our necessity to thee, thou that helpest the heart—its Physician.

We rejoice, O Lord, that thou hast taught us in ourselves a little of that which is true of thee, by the gentleness with which we bear with our children, by our patience with them, and by that disinterested kindness which springs from our loving. If in us who are evil, and even selfish, there is such fruit of goodness, how much more abundant is it in thee who art without spot, and without any evil or limitation in goodness. This is the glory of thy being. In thy hands are all things. Thou hast light and thou hast darkness. Thou hast pain and thou hast pleasure. Thou art administering both for joy and for sorrow. Thou art punishing and rewarding. Thou art encouraging and dissuading. Thou art full of all things that shall bring us away from the earthy and from the animal, toward that which is spiritual and divine, and toward our nobler selves. In Jesus Christ thou art holding forth to us the pattern of that which we should be. We behold his meekness and his gentleness; we behold his kindness and long-suffering patience; we behold his great and rejoicing love to thee, and the cheer with which he went about doing good; we behold his sympathy with men, and how he encouraged those who were rejected and outcast and helpless.

O Lord, we beseech of thee that we may bear about with us a sense of Christ. May he be present to us, in thought and in imagination. Every day may we feel that we are by faith joined to him. May we follow thy footsteps through the toughest ways of this life. Make thyself companionable to us. In all the temptations by which we are beset appear for our relief. In the midst of conflict and danger be thou our shield. When the storm is out hide us in thy pavilion till the storm be overpassed. Wait near the ship when it is bestormed, and seems likely to be sunk, and bring us peace. Yea, if we are called to walk upon the turbulent wave, still may we have faith to walk to thee when thou callest us. And if our faith fail, hold forth thy hand in rebuke, and raise us again. May our life be more and more perfectly formed by thine. More and more may it be struck through with the light and beauty of thine.

Thus may we be disciples of Christ. Thou art not ashamed of us because we are poor and needy; nor wilt thou be ashamed of us in the day of glory when thou shalt have fashioned us, when thou shalt have cleansed us from every stain, and when thou shalt present us before the throne of thy Father. May we live in the hope of that day. Though it be vague and undetermined, may we behold the coming glory, the higher life, the nobler development. May we comfort ourselves by the light which comes from this glory of the future.

Wilt thou bless spiritually all those who are in thy presence. May those who are conscious of sin in themselves find ease in the confession of their sin before God. If there are any who desire to make vows and covenants before thee, accept those vows and covenants, and help them to fulfill them. If there are any who would utter thanksgiving to thee for thy mercies toward them, accept that thanksgiving. And we pray that they may have in themselves a testimony that God hath heard them, and will bless them.

We beseech of thee, be with every one as he specially needs. Be with those who are in the midst of burdens and cares and daily labors. May they work as unto the Lord, and not as unto men. We pray that thou wilt redeem us by the trials of life, and bring us at last to the most blessed hour of departure, and then convoy us, by thine angels, home, where we shall find thee, to find whom is to find ourselves. And in thee, bearing thine image and likeness and glory, may we be content.

And we will give all the praise of our salvation to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. *Amen.*

PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Father, we pray that thou wilt bless the word spoken. May it encourage those who are in trouble. May it incite those who are hesitant. May it replenish the zeal of those whose faith is failing them.

We pray that thou wilt help us to be constant under all circumstances, and brave in all trials. May we be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.

How soon things will change! How soon all things earthly will come to an end! How soon yokes and burdens will be laid aside! How soon the trials and troubles of this life will be forgotten, or will seem to us as things of far-off memory, or as early dreams! We are hastening from the apparent to the real; from visible things to more transcendent things not seen.

Grant that we may live under the power of this truth more and more. More and more may the power of the eternal world overshadow us. More and more may we be rendered fit for thy kingdom. And, we beseech of thee, stand there before us transfigured as the light of heaven, and guide us through life. Let us not fear dying, but lay hold upon thee. If the water be troubled, or if the night be dark, speak to us comfortable words, and rescue us from the flood, and bring us to triumph and glory and immortality.

And to the Father, the Son, and the Spirit shall be the praise forever. *Amen.*

PLYMOUTH PULPIT.

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